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ROMANCE OF IRISH HISTORY..

LABRACH LOINGSEACH, OR THE DUMB PRINCE.

In the year of the world 3665, the monarch Cobthach reigned in Ireland. He waded through seas of blood to the throne; murdering with his own hand his only brother, Logary, the lawful king. He then seized on the regal authority, and caused Olioll Ayney, the son of Logary, and all his family, to be basely murdered, with the exception of Mayne or Maon, the son of Olioll, a child of about ten years, who was so shocked and horrified at the deeds of blood which he had witnessed, that he lost both his senses and his speech, and thus escaped the tyrant's hate, as a person not likely to disturb his reign of usurpation.

The unfortunate Mayne was removed by some friends of his father's cause to the court of Scoria, Prince of Corca-Duivny, now known as the barony of Barrymore, county of Cork, where he was protected until he perfectly recovered the use of his senses, though he still remained dumb.

Such was the situation of affairs in Ireland, when one sweet evening in summer, a beautiful young lady walked from the palace of Scoria. She was tall and exquisitely shaped, with her curling and fair hair falling gracefully down her shoulders, and round her high and polished brow. It was Moria, the daughter of the Prince of Corca Duivny; she was accompanied by a young man who had just reached the dawning of manhood.

The darkening shades of twilight were slowly falling over the landscape—the mountain-tops looked dim and distant—and the breeze was softly sighing itself to rest. The lady and her companion wandered for some time without an object, and at length sat down on a moss-covered shelving bank of rock which hung over a mountain rivulet, and the youth placed himself at her feet. He was gazing upwards with an intent and anxious gaze. The twilight was now past, and the summer's moon was rising lonely in the heavens.

"Alas! poor boy," murmured the princess, "well mayest thou look towards yonder heaven; 'tis the only resting place thou art likely to find. As the base hound takes the young wolf-dog by the throat, so the usurping tyrant stretches forth his hand against thy life."

The last sentence, though partially uttered and broken by a sigh, was caught by the quick ear of the boy. He turned his pallid features to her with an agonised expression of gratitude. His countenance thanked her for the interest she had taken in his forlorn fortunes; he would have spoken but he could not—he was dumb. The tears stood in his eye. She laid her hand upon his shoulder with an action of affection and sympathy.

"Look not so troubled, play-fellow of my childish days," said she: "my father has the will and the power to shield you, and Moria loves you, tenderly and faithfully!"

The youth arose, and as he turned towards her, the moonbeams fell full upon his face. It was agitated and convulsed by many feelings—he gasped as if for utterance—his eyes rolled in his head—and an agony seemed to shake him, and pronouncing the name, "Moria," he fell senseless to the earth. She was wild with surprise and terror at hearing the dumb youth speak; and she was on the point of running for assistance when her father, with a party of soldiers, came to the spot. He gazed on the prostrate young man, and his brow grew dark with sorrow. "What!" said he, "have they already dabbled in his blood? have the weapons of the murderers drank the pure gore of their lawful king?"

He stooped down, and finding no traces of blood, and that life was not extinct, he ordered the soldiers to bear him to the palace.

"He still lives," he continued, "and may yet baffle the usurper's vengeance: but," seeing his daughter, "Moria, what do you do here, or what is the reason of all this?"

The young woman endeavoured to explain, and the old man eyed her sternly, as she related how she heard the young prince pronounce her name.

In a few days after, and when Mayne had recovered the

perfect use of his speech, a barque was privately prepared, and he was conveyed to the shore, where a favouring breeze filling his sails, he embarked for France, where he was kindly received by his relative, the king of that country.* Here his courage and superior abilities soon raised him to distinction, and, finally, to the command of the armies of the kingdom. The love of Moria, and the feelings of the patriot were lulled in his bosom by the flow of honors and fortunes that covered him; and the dangers and bustle of the busy life which he was obliged to lead, gave little time for reflecting on his usurped crown in the green isle of his heart; and new friends, honor, fame, ambition, and a new home, chased from his breast all the warmth of the feelings which inspired it on leaving his native country. Years flew over him, and found him still the favourite warrior of the French king and the French people.

He was sitting one evening in an alcove that opened into a beautiful garden, in a listless, yet an unpleasant kind of mood, the sounds of a harp from a brake of rose trees in the garden fell on his ear. It proceeded from a wandering minstrel from a strange country, who having delighted the ears of the menials, they placed him there to try if his matchless skill in the instrument could dispel for a while the melancholy that had dwelt with their master for some time. The first sounds of the music that reached the ear of Mayne made him start, for they were those of his far off home, and notes well known and cherished in his by-gone days.

It was one of those sweet thrilling effusions that to this day characterize the music of his country. The air ceased, and another as well known and beautiful succeeded; both were favourites with him in the days of his youth; and like the spirits of departed friends, their melodies arose within him, upbraiding him with having forgot the land of his birth, and the lips that used to breathe them in tones of surpassing sweetness and tenderness. But what was his surprise, when in his own still well-remembered and soft flowing native tongue, the minstrel accompanied the music by words similar in meaning to the following:

SONG.

There is a home to which I stray
In thoughts by day, and dreams by night;
Its fields to me are ever gay,
Its skies to me are ever bright:
Loved land! I turn, with what delight,
And bless the hour that once again
Will give thy rude cliffs to my sight,
High rising o'er the foamy main.

I would not be a glittering thing,
To live in countries far away,
For all the wealth the world could bring,
To lure or captivate my stay!
Earth could not show a bower so gay,
But it would make me love it more;
Nor power a glory could display,
To tempt me from its emerald shore.

There live the friends I've loved and tried,
That is the land my fathers won;
And shall I throw their name aside
And never say I am their son?
Shall I a base life still drag on,
A hireling on a foreign strand,
And live and die alike unknown,
A stranger in the stranger's land?

The words had scarcely died away on the breeze of evening, when Mayne, springing from his couch, rushed into the garden to where the minstrel was exercising his

* Hugony, surnamed the Great, married Kassar, of the Fair Form, daughter of the King of France, by whom he had twenty-five children. Of this large family only two sons survived him, Logary and Cobthach. Logary was murdered by Cobthach. Olioll Ayney was the son of Logary, and Maon, or Mayne, otherwise Labrach Loingseach, was the son of Olioll Ayney.

ert. A few brief words passed between them, when rushing into each other's embrace, they shed tears at the meeting, and long and loving was the first kiss of greeting. Gentle reader, the minstrel-wanderer was Moria!

It was winter, and Cobthach's palace of Dencrea, near Rosscarberry, was the scene of feasting and mirth. The day had been spent chasing the deer over the hills of Erin, and the night was now passing in joyous festivity. The monarch was reclined on a magnificent couch in the midst of his princes and nobles, when an old man enveloped in a grey mantle from head to foot, entered the hall of banquet, and placed himself at the fire. He was dressed in a druid's habit, appeared very aged and feeble, and without speaking, he glanced a keen dark eye on each and all, and took his seat. The king and nobles eyed him with wonder and astonishment, but did not speak; there was a mystery about his appearance which the king did not feel inclined in his heart to elucidate.—But among the young warriors there were sneers and suppressed titters, until one bolder than the rest, addressed the old man.

"My father is old," said he; "why should he wander? He should have rested in his oak crowned cell this frightful night."

"Nay, my son," replied the druid, "fear not for me: the storm effects not the rock though it be old in the ocean; the winds and the waves dash harmlessly round it."

"But," replied the young man, "the rock is always young in its strength, and age has fallen heavily on my father."

"My head is hoary," replied the druid, "but—"

"Aye," interrupted another, "it is certainly very venerable, but time has dealt unfairly by this curling tress:" and he held up to the view of the rest a long black tress of hair. The laugh became general against the druid, in which the king was fain to join. The druid spoke not, but his eyes flashed terrific lightnings on all around. The king met his glance, and quailed beneath the fury of its meaning; an increasing hatred and dread was inspired within him, and he ordered the druid to leave his presence. It was then that the druid stood erect, and casting off his hoary disguise, with his long grey mantle, he appeared a youthful warrior, covered from helmet to heel in glittering armour, and with a powerful axe in his hand.

"Seize him," cried the King aloud; "seize the traitor;" but no one stirred to do his bidding. "Traitor, will you not stir," said he, fiercely striking one of the nobles that stood near him. The stroke roused the nobleman from his astonishment.

"Death to my honor," he cried aloud, "a blow from the blood-stained hand of Cobthach the usurper;" and unsheathing his blade, he rushed furiously upon the monarch: but numbers threw themselves between him and Cobthach. Strife of the most deadly nature was about taking place in the hall of feasting; for some of the princes and nobles siding with their injured compeer, and others joining the king, were about (forgetting the druid) to commingle in bloody broil; and the king, in the confusion, endeavoured to effect his escape; and, gliding from the combatants, made for a private door; but the mail-clad stranger, with the uplifted axe, stood ready to receive him. Cobthach turned to another entrance, but there the stranger stood before him again. Cobthach eyed him maliciously, and, drawing his sword, rushed on the stranger with determined courage; but the young man stepping from before the deadly thrust, with the uplifted axe dashed the usurper's skull to pieces. A cry arose from one who beheld the king fall, and saw the streaming axe raised high in the stranger's hand. The nobles gazed in astonishment, and the stranger spoke.

"The vengeance of my father's house is on my steel," he cried; "here in this hall, where Cobthach murdered my grandfather, Logary, the king, and my father, Olioll Ayné, the Good; here have I, Mayne, revenged their fall."

Some shouted "long live the grandson of Logary!" but the greater number shouted, "Revenge on the murderer

of Cobthach!" and again wild tumult and the clash of arms arose within the hall. Mayne put a small horn to his mouth, and blew a shrill blast, which was answered from without; and soon the guards of the palace, surprised and unarmed, were seen flying before a band of strange soldiers, clad in polished armour, and soon the hall was filled with the victorious foreigners.

It is useless now to dwell longer on our history. The crown was given to Mayne, who then obtained the title of Labrach Loingséach; and who in a short time afterwards possessed the beautiful and faithful Moria, as it was to her love and fidelity he owed the kingdom.

ATMOSPHERIC AIR.

It must be evident to those who study the works of nature, that she has not only contemplated and provided for the necessities and comforts, but also for the tastes and enjoyments of man. Thus while all the habitable portions of our earth are lavishly embellished with every thing to gratify the eye, and while the variety presented by them communicates pleasure, the whole is surrounded by an atmosphere, not only essential to the preservation of animal and vegetable life, but so transparent, that the various prospects which the earth presents may be seen with the greatest accuracy through it.

Air is a fluid, and like all other elastic fluids, yields to the slightest impulse, and is set in motion with the greatest ease. It is only upon this principle of its fluidity that its rapid motions (some winds moving at the rate of four thousand feet in a minute,) can be accounted for; and were it not for this property, no sound could dwell upon its bosom, or delight our ear with symphonious harmony.—Like a fluid, air presses in every direction; and however it may be consumed in the various operations of life, is immediately replaced by a fresh portion, which in defiance of our efforts to exclude it by doors and windows, forces its way through the smallest crevices, and performs that important office which Providence has allotted to it.

Had we no atmosphere, the moment the sun sank under the horizon we should experience such instantaneous darkness, and when he rose again, such instantaneous light, as would completely destroy our powers of vision; but Providence has so ordained it, that the sun illuminates the atmosphere some time before he rises and after he sets; thus making twilight, and relieving our eyes by a gradual light and shade. This atmosphere, which is computed to extend forty-five miles above the earth's surface, in its lower part is dense or heavy, while the upper part rare or thin; hence there is more air in a square foot on the earth's surface than in ten square feet at the elevation of a mile, consequently where it is continually in use there is a never failing supply.

When Robertson and Jackaroff ascended in an air balloon from Petersburg, in June 1804, they took some live pigeons with them; at different heights they gave liberty to their birds, who seemed very unwilling to accept it; they were so terrified with their situation, that they clung to the boat until forced from it; nor were their fears groundless, for on account of the thinness and rarity of the air, their wings were nearly useless, and they fell towards the earth with great rapidity. The second struggled with eagerness to regain the balloon, but in vain; and the third, thrown out at the greatest elevation, fell towards the earth like a stone, so that they supposed he did not reach it alive. This circumstance affords a proof of the suitableness of every creature for the medium in which it lives: the density of the air near the earth is exactly what is requisite for the residence of the feathered tribes.

By the immense pressure which this atmosphere exerts upon all bodies, and which is computed to be 2160 pounds weight on every square foot, they are prevented from flying or evaporating from the earth; were it not for this, we should not have a drop of water on the earth, and every blood vessel in our bodies would expand and burst. When Count Zambecari and his companions ascended in a balloon on the 7th of November, 1783, they found, on arriving at a great height, their hands and feet so swollen, that it was necessary for one of the party, who